

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

By the present amendment the Applicant has cancelled original claims 1 to 9 and substituted new claims 10 and 11. It is believed that the newly introduced claims comply with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph.

The purpose of the present invention, as clearly indicated in the specification, is to provide an automatic process or method for making the clamps of a garment hanger wherein the contact surfaces of the clamps are covered with a soft, spongy fabric for secure gripping of the garment. The process includes fastening the fabric to the contact surface of each clamp, such as by welding, so that the fused together portions do not directly contact the garment being held. Thus, only the soft, spongy fabric covering the contact surfaces of the clamps comes into contact with the garment and not the hard material of the fused portions whereby the gripping by the clamp is more effective. Newly introduced claim 10 supports this process by specifying that the soft, spongy fabric material is overlaid onto the contact surface of the clamp which has a step (8) thereon and the material is then welded to the contact surface so that the welding cord (7) is below the step (8) and thus not in contact with the fabric of the garment gripped by the clamp.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected original claims 6 to 9 as being obvious under 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,398,854, to Blanchard, in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,009,925, to Hall et al, and U.S. Patent No. 5,269,872, to Ueda. The Examiner maintains that the Blanchard reference discloses a garment hanger having two clamps made of lever devices having a strip of soft material on at least one of the levers, the two levers co-acting to hold a garment there between. The Examiner then maintains that Hall et al discloses a method of welding plastics wherein a seam is formed around the edges of the materials being welded using a base on which the material to be welded is laid and a welding head which welds the layers together. The Examiner cites the Ueda reference for disclosing that discrete items can be produced from a continuous strip by welding and cutting during the welding step.

First of all it should be pointed out in connection with the Hall et al reference that both sheets of thermoplastic material are heated to the softening point of the material and then pressure is applied to the areas to be welded. See Patent, Column 1, lines 56 to 62; Column 2, line 8 to 18; and lines 62 to 67. On the other hand, according to the process described in the specification and claims herein, it is only the material of the contact surface (4) of the clamp which is raised to a temperature

above its melting point which is below the melting temperature of the material strip (6) so that the material of strip (6) does not melt when it is joined with the material to the contact surface (4).

Furthermore, there is no showing in any of the cited references that the welding cord formed during the welding process is or should be positioned away from the clamping surface (e.g. surface 46 in Blanchard) which contacts the hung garment so that the gripability of the surface is not detracted from. This is specifically provided for according to the present invention in that a step (8) is formed on the contact surface (4) of each clamp and the soft, fabric strip (6) applied onto the contact surface of the clamp and welded thereto along a periphery which is below the step (8) formed thereon. Thus it is clear that the welding cord (7) formed by the welding of strip (6) to contact surface (4) does not contact the fabric of the garment hung from the clamp. In this way, the entire surface of the clamp which engages the fabric of the hung garment is free of the non-friction material of the welding cord.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that none of the cited references shows or describes or even hints at the distinguishing features pointed out above and thus the combination thereof cannot render obvious newly introduced claims 10 and 11. It is, therefore, respectfully requested that claims 10 and 11 be allowed so that the case may be passed to issue. Such action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
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ENCL. Copy of Petition for 2 Month Extension of Time

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